16. LIFE POINT
ZZZZ
BRI... Y'DUMMY... Mmph.
BRIAREOS!

Hmm... EVEN AT MAXIMUM ZOOM I CAN ONLY JUST MAKE OUT THE BASIC PATTERN.
I CAN'T TELL IF IT'S PART OF A FILE OR SOME KIND OF DECRYPTION KEY. BUT JUDGING FROM THE SITUATION, I'D SAY IT MUST BE WHAT THE FBI WAS SEARCHING FOR YESTERDAY.
SO THAT'S WHY SHE WENT FOR THE BACK OF MY HEAD THAT WAY--SHE MUST HAVE BEEN DESPERATE TO UNLOAD IT. I GUESS I OWE MY LIFE TO THAT "FANG" GUY TWICE OVER. SHOULD WE TAKE IT TO THE FBI?
HEY! I JUST THOUGHT OF SOME-THING!
IF THAT SPY YESTERDAY REALLY DID PLANT IT ON ME, SHE'LL BE COMING HERE TO GET IT BACK!
NO PROBLEM. WE GIVE IT TO THE FBI, THEY GIVE US A FAKE CHIP MICROTRANS-MITTER. YOU PUT IT BACK ON YOUR NECK WHERE IT WAS STUCK BEFORE, AND WAIT.
IF YOU'RE GONNA GO A-FISHING, MAY AS WELL TRY FOR THE BIG ONE!
DIDN'T SHE WORRY ABOUT IT FALLING OFF? AND HOW ABOUT ME FINDING IT, LIKE I JUST DID?
FOR THAT YOU'VE GOT TO THANK VEL--er, ARUGESS NORMALLY, WE'D HAVE BEEN UP ALL NIGHT DOING PAPERWORK, OR EVEN LOCKED UP IN AN FBI CELL, AND IF IT FELL OFF THERE
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. STILL, THAT SPY MUST BE DESPERATE TO GET AWAY, WHICH MEANS SHE'LL PROBABLY WANT TO MAKE CONTACT SOME TIME TODAY.
LOOKS LIKE WE SHOULD TAKE A WALK.
USING THAT ZOOM FUNCTION IS TRICKY!
OUR SPY FRIEND CAN AMUSE HERSELF ROOTING THROUGH OUR GARBAGE.
HEH HEH

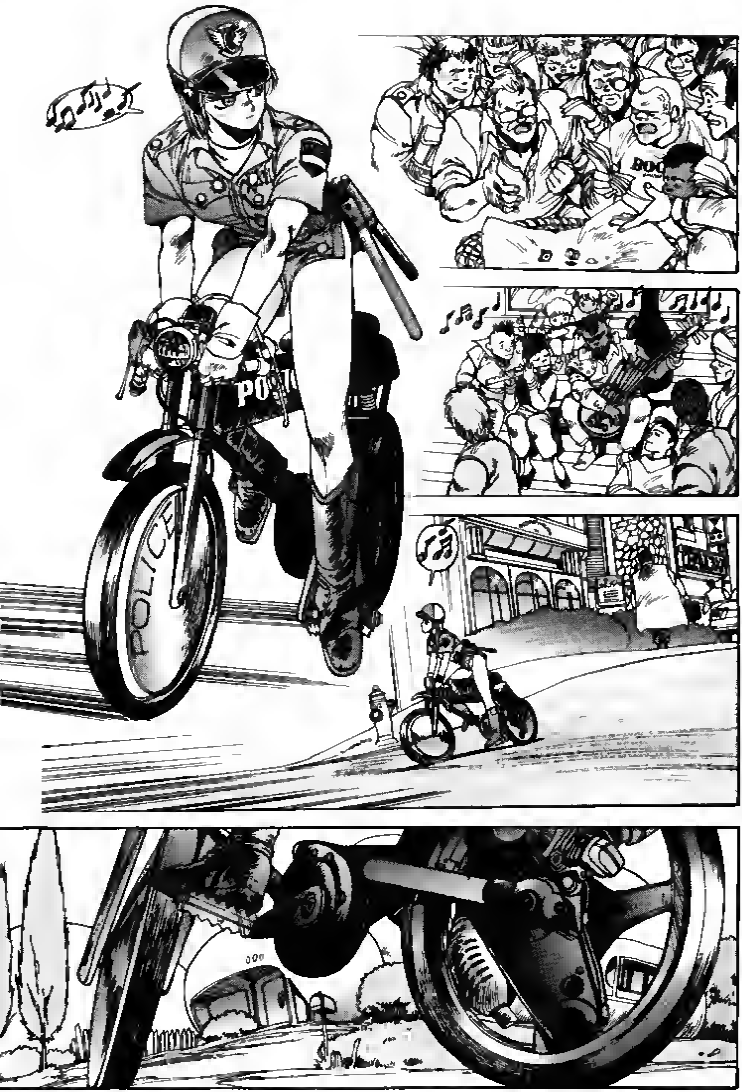
YOU WANT A LETTER OF COMMEN-DATION?
NOT ME-- HOW ABOUT YOU, DEUNAN?
HOW ABOUT PICKING UP THE LOAN PAYMENTS ON MY GUGES?
DO I NOT EMBARRASS THE HELL OUT OF ME? MAKE YOU MY SHARE?
NEVER HURTS TO TRY, PAPS IT?
ARRAY
UNTIL WE HEAR BACK FROM FORENSICS ON WHETHER THIS THING IS REAL OR NOT, I WANT YOU AND YOSHINO TO COVER THE TWO OF THEM.
YOU GOT IT.
WHAT I GAVE THEM WAS A BACKUP OF THE REAL CHIP.
IN THAT CASE, I'LL JUST TAKE IT BACK TO POSEIDON AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED.

TOO BAD THEY DON'T TRUST US THIS TAKES TOO MUCH TIME.
ARUGESS, THIS LAD HERE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND A THING. DROP HIM OFF THE TEAM, WILL YOU?
IT'S A BIG, BAD WORLD OUT THERE, LITTLE BOY. POSEIDON ISN'T THE ONLY COUNTRY THAT WANTS OLYMPUS FOR ITSELF
AND I STILL THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER TO RUN A BACK-GROUND CHECK ON THAT CYBORG AND THE GIRL.
I'LL INFILTRATE SWAT EASY ENOUGH. MY COVER'S STILL INTACT.
I SAID BOTH OF YOU COVER THEM - ORDERS!
IF YOU DON'T TRUST ME, IT'LL TAKE TOO MUCH TIME. OLD AGE MAKING YOU A COWARD, ARUGESS?
Huh!
OR DO YOU HAVE SOME OTHER REASON FOR BEING SO CAREFUL? SOMETHING LIKE, "IF THOSE TWO TURN OUT TO BE AGENTS, IT'S GOING TO BE A BIT EMBARRASSING FOR Mr ARUGESS" ...?
THAT'S ENOUGH OF YOUR CRAP! LET'S GET MOVING!
I'LL TELL LANCE YOU NEED ESWAT CLEARANCE. THERE'LL BE A PASS IN THE DROP BOX BY NOON.

STREET
PRAM
Ziggy's Cartoons
Fish Arts

Buy thee Cyber 7 and be blessed
MARX

CROWLEY'S


POLICE

SO THIS IS HITOMI'S NEW PLACE...
Hmm
LOOKS LIKE AN INSECT-EATING MUSHROOM.
WELL, YOU WON'T FIND A WORSE-TASTING BUG THAN ME!
HITOMI'S
HEY, DEUNAN! GOOD TO SEE YOU!
HI!
SSSHHHSSS
ALL ALONE TODAY?
BRIAREOS WENT TO THE HOSPITAL TO GET SOME KIND OF BULLET-PROOFING DONE.
SSHHSS
WHERE'S HITOMI?

I THINK SHE'S IN THE BACK ROOM IN THE BLOCK OVER THERE. SHE'S GOT COMPANY, SOME RUSSIANS.
Hmm
I HEAR SHE HAD TO MOVE OUT OF HER OLD PLACE BECAUSE IT WAS OVERRUN WITH IMMIGRANTS. LOOKS LIKE SHE'S DONE OKAY FOR HERSELF, THOUGH
YEAH, WELL...ACTUALLY, SHE'S GOT TO SHARE IT WITH SOME BIGWIG NAMED ARTEMIS. HARDLY EVER AROUND, THOUGH
GOT A QUESTION FOR YOU.
WHICH IS?
YOU REALLY NEED ALL THOSE TOOLS?
YEAH, BUT YOU KNOW, THE PARTS AND ADJUSTMENTS I CAN TINKER WITH GET FEWER AND FEWER ALL THE TIME. THESE THINGS ARE ALMOST TOO WELL-MADE THESE DAYS, DAMN IT...
SOUNDS LIKE YOU NEED SOME LIFE EXTENSION TREATMENTS FOR YOUR SPIRIT.
THANKS, YOSHI
I DUNNO. YOU'D THINK THEY COULD LEAVE SOME LEEWAY IN THERE, THOUGH. TIME FOR A CHANGE IN DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

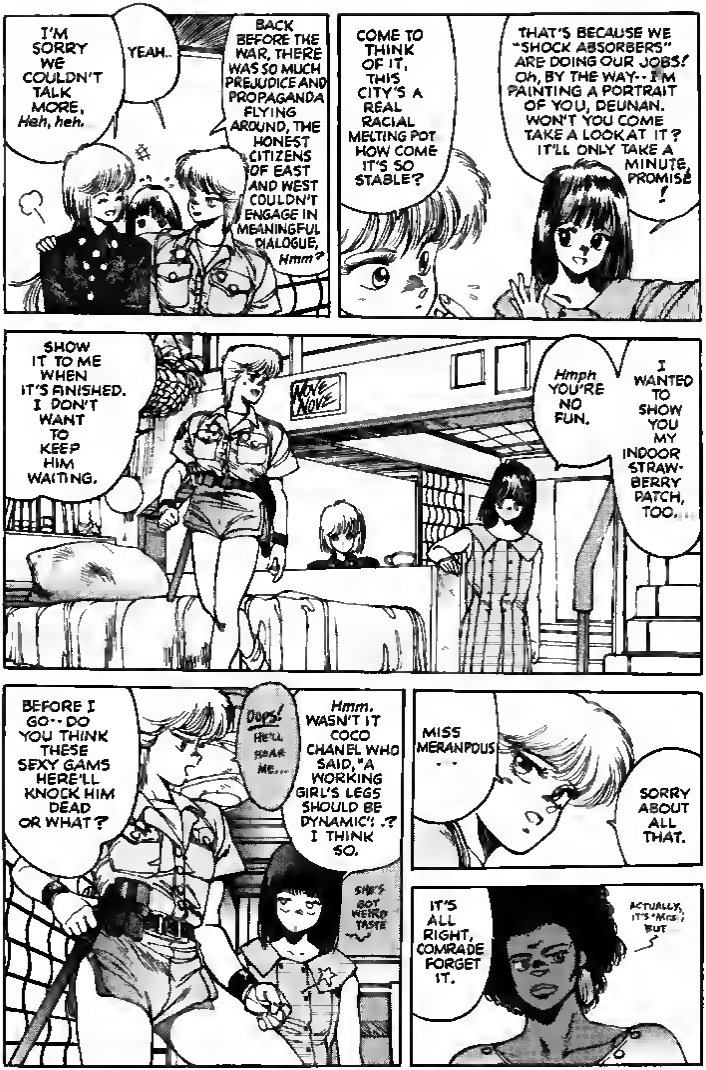
JEEEZ. THIS PLACE'D BE A REAL PAIN FOR ANY SORT OF INDOOR ASSAULT.
HITOMI, IT'S ME, DEUNAN! YOU HOME?
COME ON IN!
Allô!
KSHAK
!
WHIST
OOPS.

WELL, GEE!
SHE WAS POSITIVELY LURKING BY THE DOOR, NOT MAKING A SOUND...
YOU AMERIKI ARE PRETTY SCARY!
ARE WE? WOW! A CATHEDRAL ROOF!
GEE... MY HEART'S STILL POUNDING, DEUNAN!
I'M LUCKY SHE WAS A POLICE OFFICER...
DON'T FEEL BAD.
THIS CITY'S SO PEACEFUL, YOU'RE BOUND TO LET DOWN YOUR GUARD SOMETIMES.
I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT UNIFORM BEFORE
Heh
I'M JUST WEARING THIS FOR FUN WE'VE GOT A BRIEFING AT FIVE.
THEY SAID IT'S THE SAME TECHNOLOGY THEY USE FOR LIFE EXTENSIONS. THE DOCS KEPT TALKING ABOUT SOUND WAVES, VIBRATIONS, HOW IMPORTANT RHYTHM IS... IT WAS LIKE THEY WERE DISCUSSING MUSIC
WOW...YOU ORIGINALS ARE SO LUCKY! YOU HEAL FAST, YOU CAN'T SEE THE REPAIR MARKS...
AND YOUR CHEEK! THE SCARS ARE ALL GONE!

Ahem!
AREN'T YOU GOING TO INTRODUCE US?
Oh! SORRY, SORRY!
I'M MASHA GAVILOV THE THIRD SHE'S MY BODYGUARD, MISS MERANPOUS. YOU MUST BE THE FAMOUS DEUNAN KNUTE...?
YOU'RE FROM THE EAST BLOC? ENGLAND, MAYBE?
NO... THE OUTSKIRTS OF MOSCOW!
SHE GOT STRANDED HERE DURING THE WAR, WHILE SHE WAS ON A WORLD TOUR. THAT'S WHEN SHE LEARNED OUR LANGUAGE.
SO YOU'RE ASSERTING YOUR CIVIL RIGHTS?
OF COURSE!
CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG, BUT THERE AREN'T MANY BLACK SOVIETS, ARE THERE? YOU'RE NOT JUST SEEKING POLITICAL ASYLUM OR FREEDOM FROM--SORRY MOST OF THE BLACKS I MEET THROUGH MY JOB ARE TRYING TO KILL ME--MAKES ME A LITTLE PREJUDICED HOPE I DIDN'T OFFEND YOU.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, I WENT TO MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, I'VE HEARD IT ALL BUT YOU'D BE SMART NOT TO TALK THAT WAY ON THE OUTSIDE-- IF SOMEONE FROM EUMENIDES HEARD YOU...
EUMENIDES ...?
SHIPS FROM ALPHA CENTAURI?
IT'S A U.S./AFRICAN BLACK SUPPORT GROUP FORMED RIGHT AFTER THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA THEY CALL THEM "THE BLACK NAZIS," BUT THEY'RE NOT REALLY THAT KIND OF ORGANIZATION AT ALL.

OLYMPUS IS A WONDERFUL CITY... SO MUCH FREEDOM, JUST LIKE MOSCOW, EVEN EUMENIDES ISN'T VERY POWERFUL HERE...
THEY SHOULD CALL IT "THE CITY OF FREEDOM" THE WAY THEY CALL LOS ANGELES "THE CITY OF ANGELS."
ACTUALLY, L.A. IS MORE LIKE "THE CITY OF BUREAUCRATS" THESE DAYS... HA, HA...
WHAT...?
YOU KNOW, WHAT WE'RE ALL SEEKING ISN'T AS DIFFERENT AS THE WORDS WE USE MAKE IT SOUND.
Oh, WOW! "MYSTERIES OF THE ORIENT"...!
ISN'T IT JUST TOO JAPANESE?
ISN'T THIS ONE OF THOSE ZEN GARDENS OR SOMETHING?
A MUCH MORE DYNAMIC HARMONY THAN IN AFRICA -NOT SO MUCH "STILLNESS" AS "CONTROL," I THINK.
LIKE THEY SAY, "ALL THE EXTERNAL UNIVERSE IS GATHERED HERE, FORMING THE INNER UNIVERSE. ALL THE INNER UNIVERSE IS HERE, CREATING THE OUTER UNIVERSE."
色即是空 空即是色* --IT'S LIKE A MANDELBROT SET!
THAT'S NOT ALL IT IS!
*SHIKISOKU-ZEKU KUSOKU-ZESHIKI: ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS IN JAPANESE BUDDHISM. ALL THINGS ARE AN EXPRESSION OF KHARMA AND HAVE NO EXISTENCE INDEPENDENT OF CAUSE AND EFFECT. REALITY AS WE SEE IT IS THEREFORE ILLUSION, YET THROUGH OUR PERCEPTION OF IT, ILLUSION BECOMES REALITY.

VRRW
!
VRMMBMBMBMB
WHO--
OH, WOW!!
?
IT'S MY RIDE!


I'M SORRY WE COULDN'T TALK MORE, Heh, heh.
YEAH.
BACK BEFORE THE WAR, THERE WAS SO MUCH PREJUDICE AND PROPAGANDA FLYING AROUND, THE HONEST CITIZENS OF EAST AND WEST COULDN'T ENGAGE IN MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE, Hmm?
COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS CITY'S A REAL RACIAL MELTING POT HOW COME IT'S SO STABLE?
THAT'S BECAUSE WE "SHOCK ABSORBERS" ARE DOING OUR JOBS! Oh, BY THE WAY-- I'M PAINTING A PORTRAIT OF YOU, DEUNAN. WON'T YOU COME TAKE A LOOK AT IT? IT'LL ONLY TAKE A MINUTE, PROMISE!
SHOW IT TO ME WHEN IT'S FINISHED. I DON'T WANT TO KEEP HIM WAITING.
MOVE! MOVE!
Hmph YOU'RE NO FUN.
I WANTED TO SHOW YOU MY INDOOR STRAWBERRY PATCH, TOO.
BEFORE I GO-- DO YOU THINK THESE SEXY GAMS HERE'LL KNOCK HIM DEAD OR WHAT?
Oops! He'll hear me...
Hmm. WASN'T IT COCO CHANEL WHO SAID, "A WORKING GIRL'S LEGS SHOULD BE DYNAMIC"? .? I THINK SO.
She's got weird taste
MISS MERANPOUS . . .
SORRY ABOUT ALL THAT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, COMRADE FORGET IT.
ACTUALLY, IT'S NICE; BUT

WOW! WOW!
WHAT? ME TOO?
WE'LL LOAD IT IN BACK
I, I DON'T WANT TO BEG YOU TO GIVE ME A RIDE, BUT THE NEXT TIME YOU COME, COULD YOU...?
SURE WEAR YOUR LANDMATE, AND YOU'LL BE A GOOD FIT.
SO WHERE DO I SIT, huh?
UP FRONT IN FIRST CLASS! ANY COM-PLAINTS?
YAEEE!
SEE YOU LATER!
RRR
VRMMMMMM

THAT COLOR LOOKS GOOD ON YOU!
NOT AS GOOD AS YOUR LEGS!
Hee, hee... YOU LIKE 'EM?
SAY, WHY DON'T WE TAKE IN THAT SPECIAL EXPO ON OUR NEXT DAY OFF?
NO WAY! I DON'T NEED TO SEE ANY MORE SYMBOLS OF MEGALOMANIA AND POWER TRIPPING!
Yayoi
RUSH
Mädchen
VAGINA!

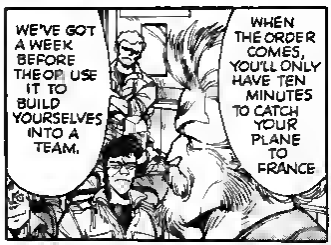
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GO TO OPS ROOM FIVE IN BLOCK TWELVE.
TIK TIK
YOU FIGURE EVERY-ONE'S THERE ALREADY?
E.SWAT
OLYMPIC POLICE
NICE SMELL, DARLIN', BUT IT COULD GET YOU KILLED.
WAIT, THAT'S BUT...

Oh, NO! IT'S A TRAGEDY! NO CHAIRS I CAN SIT ON! AIEEE! DOOMED TO THE FLOOR OR COLD FLAGSTONES!
NO WAY! I RECOGNIZE THAT TONE! BEG AND PLEAD IF YOU WANT, BUT YOU'RE NOT SITTING ON MY LAP!
MP
OLYMPUS POLICE
YAMATE!
YO, THERE, BUSINESS PARTNER.
"BUSINESS PARTNER"? WELL, MAYBE.
I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU TWO, MY NAME'S DORIC.*
STRANGE NAME, huh? BUT I'M NOT A GUY, YOU KNOW.
* DOH-REESE
"DORIC," IS IT? MAYBE I SHOULD CALL MYSELF "CORINTH" OR SOMETHING?
AND THAT'S "IONIA" BEHIND ME.*
HEY, CUT THAT OUT, PEUNAN!
YOU'RE AN INTERESTING GIRL... NOT VERY SWEET, THOUGH.
SHINJI-SHIT WILL AT LEAST GET SOME REST?
DAMN STINGRAY!
SO YOU SAY YOU'RE HALF GERMAN AND HALF CHINESE, hmm? I'D LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR HOMELANDS SOMETIME.

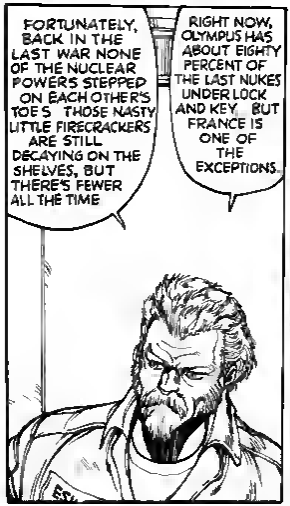
* THE ANCIENT ROMANS OFTEN APPLIED THE GREEK ARCHITECTURAL TERMS DORIC, CORINTHIAN, AND IONIC TO PEOPLE. IN ORDER, THEY REPRESENTED STRONG AND MASCULINE CHARACTER, GIRLISH AND SWEET, AND FINALLY ELEGANT AND INTELLECTUAL.

ACTUALLY, MY NATIONALITY'S OLD AMERICAN
I DON'T LIKE COMMIES, SO AFTER THE THIRD SUMMIT I WENT
OH YEAHHH.
SO WHY THE ASIAN ACCENT?
OKAY, LET'S GET STARTED!
SAY.. YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING STUCK TO YOUR NECK!
REALLY? IT CAN WAIT UNTIL WE'RE DONE HERE.
Tsk!
RIGHT!
AS IF I EVEN NEEDED TO SAY IT, THIS IS ALL TOP SECRET.
ESMAT
Oh, NO! NOT AN IRREGULAR POLICE ACTION, SIR?!
YOU THINK SCUM LIKE YOU ARE GOOD ENOUGH FOR THAT, eh?!

I'M THE ONE WHO PICKED YOU SORRY LOT OF JACKASSES OUT OF ALL THE SQUADS IN ESWAT.
INDIVIDUALLY, YOU'RE USELESS-- JUST A BUNCH OF LOUSY COPS.
BUT UNDER MY ORGANIZATION, USING MY TACTICS, YOU CAN PULL OFF ANY OPERATION IN THE WORLD!
LANCE!


WE'VE GOT A WEEK BEFORE THE OP. USE IT TO BUILD YOURSELVES INTO A TEAM.
WHEN THE ORDER COMES, YOU'LL ONLY HAVE TEN MINUTES TO CATCH YOUR PLANE TO FRANCE

ALL RIGHT! I REALLY GO FOR THOSE FRENCH BABES!
GIVE IT UP! HALF OF 'EM ARE LESBIANS!
NO SHIT? WELL, HALF AREN'T!


FORTUNATELY, BACK IN THE LAST WAR NONE OF THE NUCLEAR POWERS STEPPED ON EACH OTHER'S TOES. THOSE NASTY LITTLE FIRECRACKERS ARE STILL DECAYING ON THE SHELVES, BUT THERE'S FEWER ALL THE TIME
RIGHT NOW, OLYMPUS HAS ABOUT EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE LAST NUKES UNDER LOCK AND KEY. BUT FRANCE IS ONE OF THE EXCEPTIONS.

THE OFFICIAL REASON FOR THIS OP IS TO TAKE DOWN THE SAFE HOUSES OF A DRUG SMUGGLING RING CALLED SABBATH. WELL, WE'VE ALL HEARD THAT ONE BEFORE.
BUT YOU CAN THINK OF IT AS A GESTURE TO THE WORLD THAT OLYMPUS IS WILLING TO STRIKE, AND TO STRIKE ANYWHERE, IF AND WHEN IT HAS TO.
YOU COULD ALSO SAY IT'S A "DIPLOMATIC MESSAGE" TO A CERTAIN FRENCH PRESIDENT WITH DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR.

DRUGS, huh? THAT'S ONE THING YOU CAN'T GET RID OF, EVEN IF YOU BURN DOWN ALL THE POPPY FIELDS IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE!
Eh? YOU WERE IN ON THAT OP? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE THAI ECONOMY--?
HERE ARE YOUR TEAM LISTS I'LL GIVE YOU YOUR TACTICAL DIRECTIVES AFTER OUR UNDERCOVER AGENTS REPORT IN
NO GUGES LAND-MATES THIS TIME--WE'LL BE USING ORCS.
TRAINING STARTS AT 0500--DON'T SLEEP IN!
TAKE 'EM WITH YOU AND KEEP SMILING
FYI, THE NAME OF THIS OP IS BENANDANTI.*
DIS-MISSED!
SO WHAT'S WITH THE NAME OF THIS OP? WE SUPPOSED TO BATTLE EVIL SPIRITS OR SOMETHING?
JUST AS LONG AS THEY'RE ONLY AS REAL AS THE USUAL "EVIL SPIRIT," heh?
KEEP SMILING
YOU HUNGRY?
FOOD! FOOD!
ISN'T FRANCE STILL SELLING WEAPONS TO THE FAMINE?

*TAKEN FROM AN ANCIENT EASTERN EUROPEAN LEGEND. THE NAME OF THOSE WHOSE SPIRITS SET FORTH AT THE TURN OF THE SEASONS TO BATTLE THOSE WHO WALK THE PATH OF EVIL. THERE IS A BUMPER HARVEST WHEN THE BENANDANTI WIN, AND FAMINE IF THEY LOSE

LANCE!
A5-OR
A PROBLEM, SIR?
WE DON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO SET UP OR RUN SIMULATIONS, IS THIS REALLY GOING TO WORK?
POLICE JOBS ARE ALWAYS LIKE THIS, SIR. IF YOU'RE OUT TO MAKE A BIG SPLASH, THEN THE UNIT ORGANIZATION I'VE PROPOSED IS JUST WHAT YOU NEED.
NO NEED TO CONCERN YOURSELF, SIR.
A3-OR
WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT DOUBLE AGENT OUR UNDERCOVER MAN WAS WORRIED ABOUT?
WE SENT IN A FRESH AGENT TO DISPOSE OF HIM. OUR MAN'S COVER IS STILL INTACT.
IT TOOK A WHILE TO ALLAY THE DRUG LORD'S SUSPICIONS, BUT IT WORKED.
HAPPENS ALL THE TIME IN POLICE OPS.
Tele cayuno con Hena?
KTO ETO?
No tengo hombre porque he cambio

Heh, heh, heh!
ESWAT
POLICE
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING. OH, WELL - IF YOU OVEREAT AND BARF IN TRAINING, IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS
SHE'LL TURN INTO A PIG! WELL, MAYBE A LITTLE BRUNCH IS BETTER.
AW, C'MON... ALL WE'RE GOING TO DO IS WORK OUT TIMING
MMMM. THIS IS DELICIOUS. I WAS STARVING!
OLYMPUS
Hmm. CUBA'S ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH THE FEDERATED U.S.S.R. AGAIN. THEIR NAVY'S GONE AND SHELLED THE IMPERIAL AMERICANA CAPITAL IN AUSTIN, TEXAS BACK TO THE CIVIL WAR, I GUESS.
UNKNOWN INFECTIOUS DISEASE SWEEPING IRAQ. MAJOR FLOODING IN THAILAND, HEAVY ACID RAINFALLS FROM BEIJING TO TOKYO.
OLYMPOST NEWS
ULTIMAMENTE LLUEVE DEMASIADO TAILANDIA
I'VE GOT A PROPOSAL
COULDN'T YOU TRY TO MAKE LUNCH A LITTLE MORE OF A SOCIAL EVENT?
SURE, SURE.. GREAT IDEA
I mean that
Este melón es mas grande como este
TUCK-IN
TUCK-IN
SODA

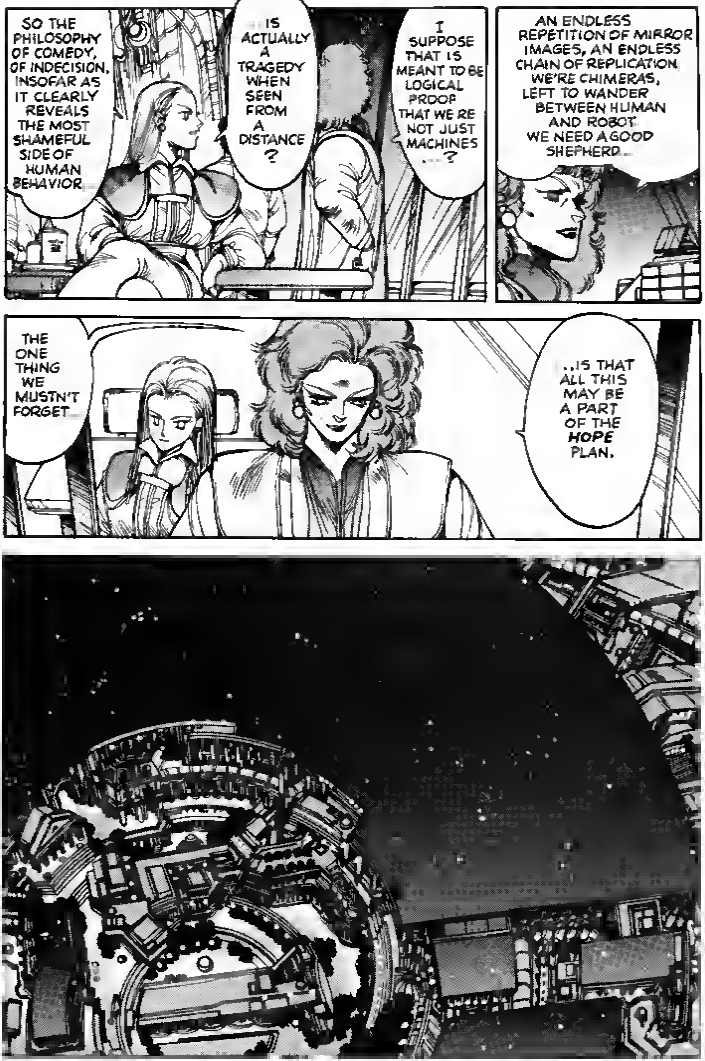
ALL THE BACKGROUND BABBLE HERE SOUNDS LIKE SOME KIND OF RELIGIOUS CHANT.
HEH!
HEY!
Wir müssen jetzt geheim arbeiten.
Was haben sie
SO, WE'RE TEAM-MATES AFTER ALL.
A TOAST TO THE TEAM! SKOAL!
IT SEEMS YOU'RE MY BACKUP, Ms. KNUTE.. I'M COUNTING ON YOU
I WONDER WHAT THE AIR SMELLS LIKE IN EUROPE? I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS ONE.
DON'T EXPECT A WELCOMING PARTY.
AFTER ALL, IT WAS OLYMPUS THAT HELPED POLYNESIA AND NEW CALEDONIA WIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM FRANCE.
FIRST THE ARACHNE GAMBIT, NOW THIS OPERATION. DON'T YOU THINK GENERAL ADMINISTRATOR ATHENA IS COMING ON A BIT STRONG?
"THE ARACHNE GAMBIT"?
ATHENA DIDN'T LIKE ONE OF THE "APPLICATIONS" POSEIDON CAME UP WITH FOR THEIR NEW SPECIAL CARBON FIBER. SO NOT ONLY DID SHE ORDER A AN EXPORT BAN, BUT SHE HAS THEM LOOKING DOWN THE BARREL OF A SPIDER GUN PLATFORM" THAT GAMBIT
PALLAS ATHENA MUST BE ROLLING OVER IN HER GRAVE!
FIRST I EVER HEARD OF IT.
WE WERE A LONG TIME OUT IN BADSIDE, SO...
Oh, REALLY?
*MORE ABOUT THIS LATER

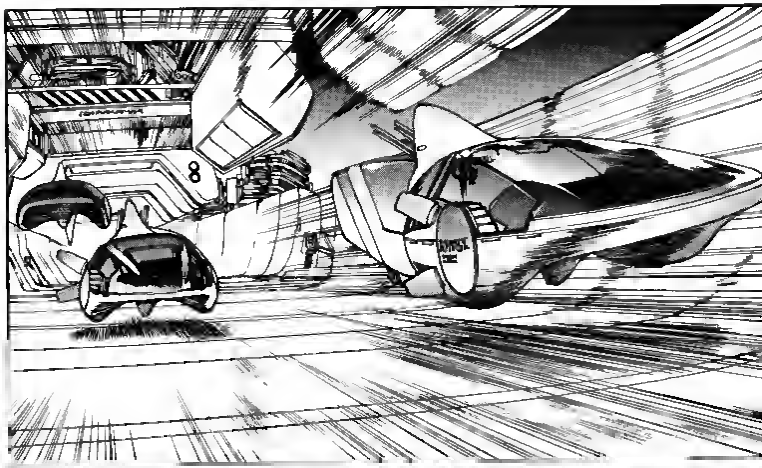
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHO THE NEW BOYS ON THE BLOCK ARE IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, FIRST THERE'S THAT POSEIDON I WAS MENTIONING--NEW JAPAN, INCLUDING THE "JAPAN TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH CENTER" OCEAN CITY. OF COURSE, IT'S NOT REALLY A COUNTRY ANYMORE, JUST A GIANT CORPORATE CONGLOMERATE.
THEN THERE'S THE MYSTERIOUS INTERNATIONAL ORGAN, OLYMPUS.
U.S AFRICA FEVERISHLY PUSHES FORESTATION POLICIES WITH THE HELP OF AID FROM OLYMPUS. THEY'RE AN OUTGROWTH OF THE OLD OAU*. ISRAEL CONTINUES TO DECLINE DESPITE THE AID POURED INTO IT BY IMPERIAL AMERICANA. THE ISLAMIC FEDERATION, AGE OLD DREAM OF THE P.L.O, GATHERS STRENGTH..ETCETERA, ETCETERA.

NOTE: PERHAPS "POSEIDON" IS A CORRUPTION OF THE JAPANESE FOR "MADE IN JAPAN" "NIPPON SEIHIN"

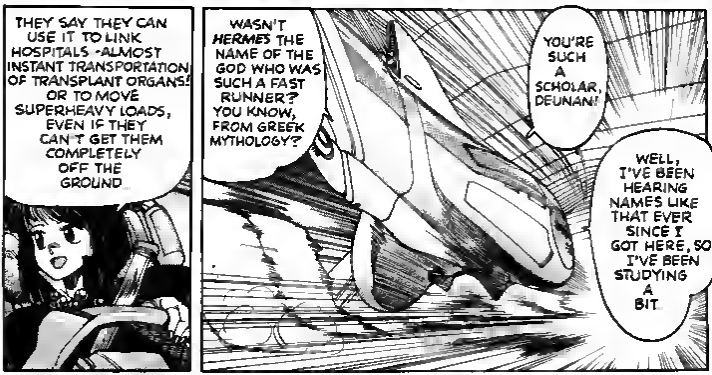
*ORGANIZATION FOR AFRICAN UNITY, HEADQUARTERED IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

JUST NOW AND THEN, ANYWAY, WHAT DO YOU THINK? WANT TO TRY OUT A NICE LITTLE THREE STAR ITALIAN RESTAURANT FOR LUNCH NEXT SATURDAY?
THAT SOUNDS QUITE DELIGHTFUL. I KNOW THE PERFECT PLACE, NOT MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES FROM HERE. I'LL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS RIGHT AWAY.
ATHENA...
I HAVE A QUESTION. MAY I...?
WHY DID YOU DO IT, WHEN YOU WERE BOUND BY ALL THOSE INVISIBLE CHAINS--YOUR DUTIES?
HUH? IS IT NOW?
WHAT? OH, I'M SORRY--I JUST ASSUMED YOU WERE GOING TO ASK ABOUT OUR INTERVENTION IN FRANCE, LIKE ALL THE MINISTERS HAVE BEEN DOING.
WHY DID I STOP PLAYING THE MARTYR? AND STOP BEING A DETER-MINIST?
NO BIG REASON. AFTER I'D LOOKED AT THE PROBLEM FROM BOTH SIDES, I FOUND I'D SWITCHED OVER TO THE OTHER CAMP.
I IMAGINE IF THE GREEK GODS WE TAKE OUR NAMES FROM SAW THE FREEDOM WE'VE GAINED FROM TECHNOLOGY--THE NEW PROMETHEUS--THEY'D HAVE QUITE A LAUGH.
THOUGH OF COURSE, TO US BIOROIDS, HUMANS ARE THE ONLY REAL GODS.
I'D LIKE TO MAKE A RESERVATION.
YES, I'LL HOLD.
WHEN GAIA FINALLY REACHED HER LIMITS AND HAD TO BE SUPPRESSED, SHE PRINTED OUT THE PROGRAM THAT HAD ALWAYS BEEN INTENDED TO APPEAR WHEN THAT HAPPENED. IT WASN'T HER OWN IDEA.
BIOROIDS AND HUMANS ARE STILL FAWNS. THAT HASN'T CHANGED, BUT AT LEAST THIS SHOWS THAT WE ARE NOT ENTIRELY PUPPETS ON A STRING. THE OLYMPUS PLAN CAN BE SEEN AS A SORT OF THEATRICAL GAME, BUILT AROUND INSPIRED AD-LIBBING.

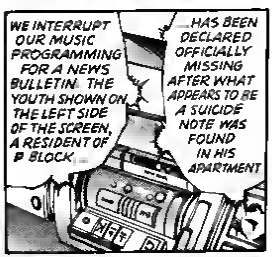

SO THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMEDY, OF INDECISION, INSOFAR AS IT CLEARLY REVEALS THE MOST SHAMEFUL SIDE OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR
...IS ACTUALLY A TRAGEDY WHEN SEEN FROM A DISTANCE ?
I SUPPOSE THAT IS MEANT TO BE LOGICAL PROOF THAT WE RE NOT JUST MACHINES ...?
AN ENDLESS REPETITION OF MIRROR IMAGES, AN ENDLESS CHAIN OF REPLICATION. WE'RE CHIMERAS, LEFT TO WANDER BETWEEN HUMAN AND ROBOT. WE NEED A GOOD SHEPHERD...
THE ONE THING WE MUSTN'T FORGET
..IS THAT ALL THIS MAY BE A PART OF THE HOPE PLAN.



IT WAS WORTH LIVING LONGER AFTER ALL!
Hee Hee
ISN'T THIS GREAT? THEY USE THIS HERMES MATERIAL TO FLOAT THE SPIDERS, TOO. IT WAS A DREAM OF MANKIND FOR YEARS AND YEARS TO MAKE SOMETHING LIKE THIS BEFORE IT WAS FINALLY INVENTED. WITHOUT HERMES, AIRCARS LIKE THIS WOULD COST A FORTUNE


THEY SAY THEY CAN USE IT TO LINK HOSPITALS -ALMOST INSTANT TRANSPORTATION OF TRANSPLANT ORGANS! OR TO MOVE SUPERHEAVY LOADS, EVEN IF THEY CAN'T GET THEM COMPLETELY OFF THE GROUND
WASN'T HERMES THE NAME OF THE GOD WHO WAS SUCH A FAST RUNNER? YOU KNOW, FROM GREEK MYTHOLOGY?
YOU'RE SUCH A SCHOLAR, DEUNAN!
WELL, I'VE BEEN HEARING NAMES LIKE THAT EVER SINCE I GOT HERE, SO I'VE BEEN STUDYING A BIT.

BACK IN THE BEGINNING THEY CALLED BIOROIDS, APHROS, YOU KNOW, "CREATURES OF FOAM," LIKE IN THE MYTH. NOT THAT WE REALLY COME FROM FOAM!
ANYWAY, THEY'VE BEEN USING GREEK NAMES FOR THINGS HERE EVER SINCE.
Hmm. IT'S ALL TOO WEIRD FOR ME


WE INTERRUPT OUR MUSIC PROGRAMMING FOR A NEWS BULLETIN. THE YOUTH SHOWN ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE SCREEN, A RESIDENT OF P BLOCK...
...HAS BEEN DECLARED OFFICIALLY MISSING AFTER WHAT APPEARS TO BE A SUICIDE NOTE WAS FOUND IN HIS APARTMENT

WE REQUEST THAT ALL THOSE RECEIVING THIS BROADCAST TAKE JUST FIVE MINUTES OF THEIR TIME TO CHECK THEIR SURROUNDINGS FOR THE SAKE OF THIS YOUTH AND HIS FAMILY.
SHOULD YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE LOCATED HIM, CALL THE FOLLOWING NUM.-
THAT'S KIND OF STRANGE, BUT A GOOD IDEA

Gee... SUICIDE, huh?
WHEN THERE'S STILL SO MUCH TO EXPERIENCE...

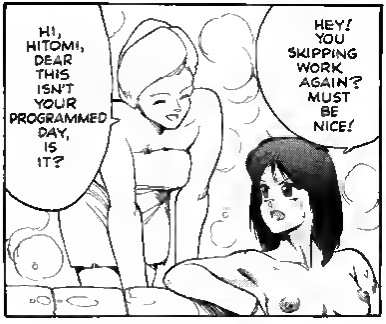
WAIT A SECOND... THAT'S ODD. IF HE'S FROM P BLOCK, HE MUST BE A BIOROID.
HITOMI! WILL YOU PLEASE WATCH THE ROAD?!
DON'T WORRY... ACCIDENTS ARE PRETTY RARE HERE

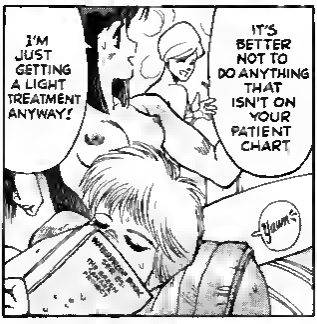
WE'RE NOT TALKING PROBABILITY HERE, YOU LUNATIC!

SAY, DEUHAN, I KNOW THAT DAY AND NIGHT DON'T REALLY MATTER MUCH IN OLYMPUS, BUT...
WHY DID YOU CALL ME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT TO GO TO A SAUNA?
BEEP BEEP
I JUST WANTED TO UNLOAD SOME-THING.
?
BESIDES, I HAVE TO GET ALL CLEANED UP AND READY
BEEEEP
OH, HO, HO! YOU NAUGHTY GIRL! SO YOU DON'T HAVE AGS SYNDROME* AFTER ALL, hmm?
"AGS"...?
THE OLD GUYS ON THE COUNCIL SAID YOU'RE LIKE A KARI, DEUNAN. BUT WHEN I SEE YOU LAUGH LIKE THAT...
"KARI"...?
AND JUST WHAT DO THEY HAVE TO DO WITH ME?!
OW OWW!
GOOD THING I DIDN'T MENTION HIPPOPOTAMI!
FAEY
IT'S SWAHILI FOR A DANGEROUS ANIMAL WITH AN UNPRE-DICTABLE TEMPERMENT
LIKE WOLVES, BIG CATS, HUMANS... TAKE AFRICAN CAPE BUFFALO-- THEY'RE DOCILE COWARDS WHEN THEY'RE IN A HERD, BUT EXTREMELY DANGEROUS WHEN ON THEIR OWN

*MASCULINIZATION IN A WOMAN BROUGHT ON BY EXCESSIVE MALE HORMONES.

YOU LOOK ABSOLUTELY EXHAUSTED.
AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE EFFORTLESS HEROINE.

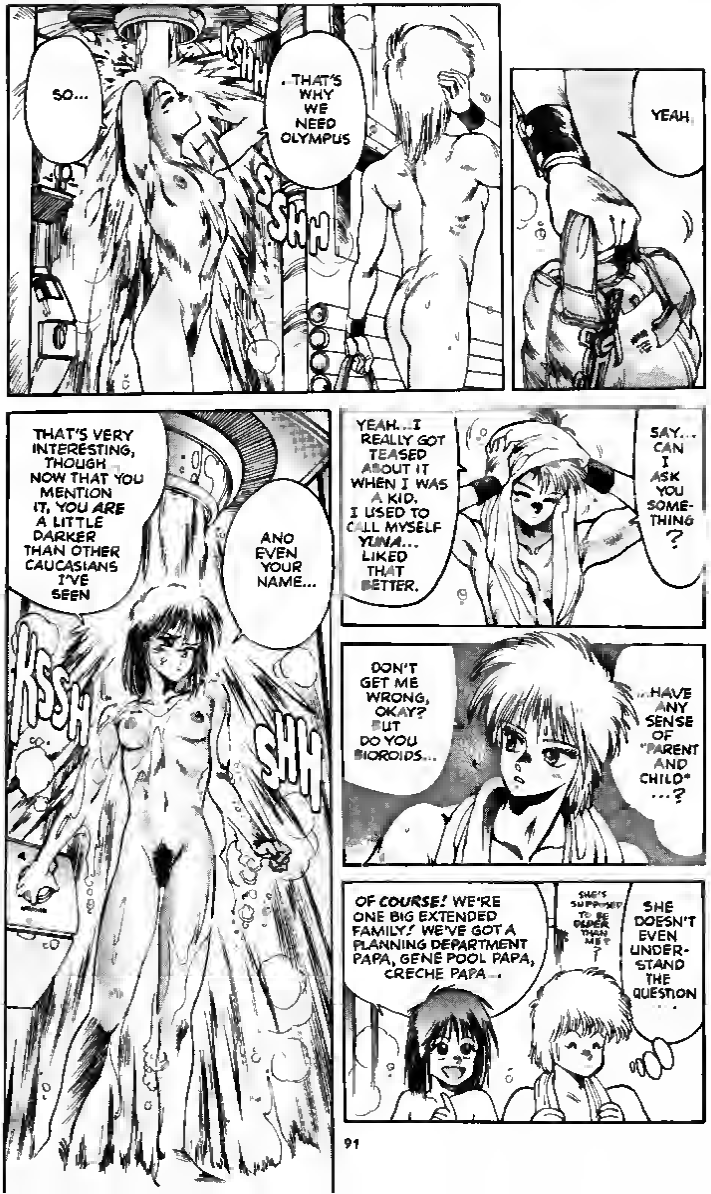

HI, HITOMI, DEAR THIS ISN'T YOUR PROGRAMMED DAY, IS IT?
HEY! YOU SKIPPING WORK AGAIN? MUST BE NICE!


I'M JUST GETTING A LIGHT TREATMENT ANYWAY!
IT'S BETTER NOT TO DO ANYTHING THAT ISN'T ON YOUR PATIENT CHART
Yours

INTER-ESTING BOOK?
Uh-huh. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE "GREEN SAHARA" PROJECT AND HOW IT'S DAMAGING THE TEMPLE OF ABU SIMBEL AND ALL THE OTHER OLD RUINS. SAME SORT OF THING HAPPENED BACK WHEN THEY BUILT THE ASWAN DAM.
IT'S SUCH A DRAG TRYING TO GET ANYTHING DONE, RIGHT OR WRONG, WITH ALL THE SIDE EFFECTS.
EVEN MY JOB'S BAD ENOUGH. AT FIRST I WAS SO SCARED I COULD HARDLY LOOK YOU IN THE EYE, DEUNAN.
YOU KNOW, YOU'D NEVER GUESS IT, BUT I'VE GOT THE BLOOD OF AFRICA--THE WATER OF THE WHITE NILE--RUNNING IN MY VEINS.
WHAT?!
YOU'RE KID-DING!
MY GRAND MOTHER WAS A "CAFE AU LAIT"* FROM SUDAN.
SO IF YOU WERE NEAR MEROE, YOUR GRAND-FATHER MUST HAVE BEEN AN ARAB ...?
ACTUALLY, NO. HE WAS AN ANGLO-FRENCH JOURNALIST FOR THE BBC.
IT WASN'T A VERY SMART MATCH, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. WITH EVERYONE FIGHTING LIKE THAT, THEY COULDN'T LEAVE AFRICA. AFTER BEING REFUSED EXIT VISAS, THEY SETTLED DOWN IN ZIMBABWE.
THAT'S WHERE MY MOTHER AND FATHER MET. WHITE AFRICANS CALL IT RHODESIA.
GOOH A WHITE BLACK AFRICAN
HE MET HER WHEN HE WAS ON A SPECIAL GREEN BERET OPERATION. SHOWS YOU HOW SERIOUS HE WAS!

*OLD SLANG FOR OFFSPRING OF BLACK/WHITE COUPLES. UNCLEAR IF IT HAS RACIST OVERTONES IN OLYMPUS

SOME BLACK SUPREMACISTS ACCUSED HER OF TRYING TO ACT LIKE A "WHITEY" BECAUSE SHE HAD PALE SKIN. THEY USED A SHOTGUN ON HER. "HEY, KAFFIR!"
WHEN I WAS TEN, MY MOTHER VISITED SAN FRANCISCO
BUT THANKS TO MY DUMB DAD, I WAS ABLE TO SURVIVE THE WAR AND MEET BRIAREOS
RESTING IN PEACE...OO
IT SAID CRIME WAS INEXTRICABLY LINKED WITH SOCIETY, IMPOSSIBLE TO SUPPRESS COMPLETELY
HEH
IT REMINDS ME OF AN OLD FBI REPORT I READ.
I'VE FORGOTTEN A LOT OF THINGS. MAYBE I'VE LAUGHED A BIT TOO MUCH.
SINCE I'VE COME TO THIS CITY..


SO...
THAT'S WHY WE NEED OLYMPUS
SHH
SSHH
YEAH
SAY... CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
YEAH... I REALLY GOT TEASED ABOUT IT WHEN I WAS A KID. I USED TO CALL MYSELF YUNA... LIKED THAT BETTER.
...HAVE ANY SENSE OF "PARENT AND CHILD" ...?
DON'T GET ME WRONG, OKAY? BUT DO YOU BIOROIDS...
SHE DOESN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION...
SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE OLDER THAN ME?
OF COURSE! WE'RE ONE BIG EXTENDED FAMILY! WE'VE GOT A PLANNING DEPARTMENT PAPA, GENE POOL PAPA, CRECHE PAPA...
THAT'S VERY INTERESTING, THOUGH NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, YOU ARE A LITTLE DARKER THAN OTHER CAUCASIANS I'VE SEEN
AND EVEN YOUR NAME...
SSSH
SHH

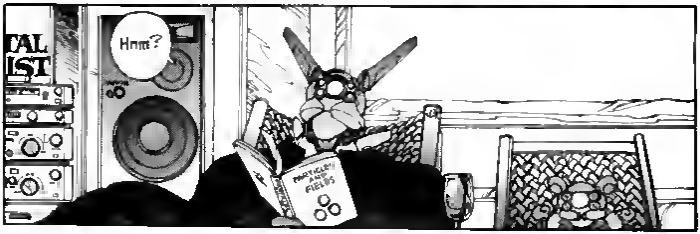
Nafea faa ipoipo?
NOT AGAIN! WHAT IS IT THIS TIME? THAI? MALAYSIAN?
TAHITIAN, ACTUALLY IT MEANS "WHEN ARE YOU GETTING MARRIED?" ♡
TO BRIAREOS, OF COURSE.
KONK
OOF!
DON'T ASK ME THINGS LIKE THAT! IT'S A PAIN IN THE... er, HEAD.
ANYWAY, I'VE NEVER REALLY THOUGHT AHEAD THAT FAR...
HE'S NINE YEARS OLDER THAN ME
REALLY? I THOUGHT ALL YOU ORIGINALS DID STUFF LIKE THAT WHEN YOU ENTER INTO PERMANENT INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, DON'T YOU?
I MEAN, IF NOT, I COULD INTRODUCE YOU TO SOME REALLY CUTE GUYS!
THANKS, BUT NO THANKS!
WHY NOT?
AS HAS BEEN SAID, "IF THE INSECTS EAT THE SPRING BUDS, THEY DIE EVER GREEN."

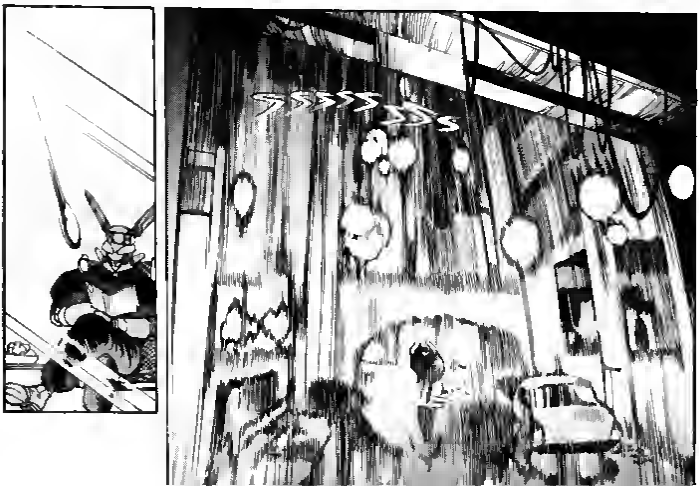
LET YOU "BE EATEN OF FLEAS AND MOSQUITOES"...? IT'S NOT AS IF YOU'RE SOME TRAGIC ACTRESS, YOU KNOW. ARE YOU RELIGIOUS OR SOMETHING...?
BEEP BEEP
IT'S NOT THAT, BUT "VERILY, I HATH FIRMLY LOCKED AWAY THIS HEART" I COULDN'T HANDLE TWO MEN. BESIDES, I'M PICKY ABOUT WHO I ASSOCIATE WITH-- LIKE THE ELECTRON CLOSEST TO THE NUCLEUS
SO HE'S THE ONE WITH THE KEY, hmm?
BUT THEN YOU SAY YOU'RE NOT THINKING OF MARRIAGE I DON'T GET IT
DOESN'T YOUR AFRICAN BLOOD MAKE A VIRTUE OF LARGE FAMILIES?
HI, THERE!
IT'S LIKE A FURNACE IN HERE!
ANOTHER CHANGE IN YOUR PATIENT CHART?
I MISSED A LIFE EXTENSION TREATMENT. THEY'VE READJUSTED IT.
I'VE FINALLY WORKED OUT YOUR CONSTELLATION OF COLORS AND FRAGRANCES.
AM I A QUARK?
OH, GREAT! BUT DID YOU FACTOR IN MY NEW BIORHYTHM VARIABLES?

I WONDERED WHAT THE DEVIL WAS GOING ON...A MASSAGE, hmm?
WHAT DID YOU THINK WAS?
YOSHINO, WILL YOU TAKE CARE OF THIS OTHER LADY?
YES, MA'AM.
YOU'RE NEW HUMAN, AREN'T YOU?
ARE YOU...?
HIT!
YES, I AM.
MY GOODNESS YOUR SKIN IS IN TERRIBLE CONDITION.
HITOMI, HOW COULD YOU TELL? WHAT GIVES US AWAY?
WE BIOROIDS ARE ALL CONSTRUCTED FROM THE SAME GENE POOL. WE'RE ALL COMRADES, WITH THE SAME GENETIC STRUCTURE
SO WE CAN PICK OUT OUR OWN KIND, LIKE TWINS... OR CLONES.
IF A BUNCH OF US DIE SOMEWHERE IN THE WORLD, WE CAN ALL FEEL IT THAT SHOULD COME IN REAL HANDY IN THE SPACE AGE.
THE VULCAN GUY ON THAT OLD SF VID PROGRAM "STAR TREK"- DIDN'T HE HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT? PRETTY USEFUL, I GUESS.
IN ONE SENSE, THOUGH, IT CAN BE DANGEROUS.

WHAT CAN?
CON-SENSUS IN A CLOSED WORLD.
WHEN COMPUTERS FIRST STARTED GETTING POPULAR, THEY ELIMINATED THE DISTANCE BARRIERS BETWEEN TOKYO, CHICAGO, PLACES LIKE THAT. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THEY CREATED A NEW BARRIER BETWEEN COMPUTER LITERATES AND ILLITERATES. IT'D BE BAD IF SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED AGAIN.
JARGONISM, YOU MEAN? YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES I THINK THAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THE PEOPLE-GATHERING OLYMPUS HAS BEEN DOING.
MAYBE IT'S TO PRESERVE A DEGREE OF LEEWAY IN THE GENE POOL? A WAY TO AVOID STASIS WITHOUT DISRUPTING ORDER. A WAY TO PREVENT THE AGING AND DEATH OF OLYMPUS ITSELF.
THEN WHAT HAPPENS IF THE WHOLE WORLD GOES INTO STASIS?
WE'RE BEING MORE CAREFUL THAN THE GREEKS WERE, OR EVEN THE JAPANESE, IT SHOULD BE OKAY, SO LONG AS THERE'S SOME KIND OF CYCLE AT A HIGHER LEVEL.
ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE, STUFF LIKE THAT.
A CLOSED RACE IS THE KEY TO SILENT CONSENSUS. THE ONLY WAY TO CREATE A CULTURE OF AGREEMENT, OUTSTANDING TECHNOLOGY AND ALMOST ABNORMAL PEACE. OF COURSE WE DON'T WANT IT TO BE TOO CLOSED, BUT...

HEAVENS, THIS IS DANGEROUS! IT COULD HAVE CUT SOMEONE.
?
Mmm.


Hmm?
PARTICLE FORCE FIELDS



TFT
The Furry Triangles
We Love Beavers